

ST JAMES' CHURCH

Brownhills



Following Jesus

APCM
REPORTS
2023

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Reports relating to St James' Ministry & Mission

1. Discipleship/Life Groups

We have continued to have 5 mid-week discipleship/Life Groups, meeting fortnightly in the evening or morning since our last APCM.

Wednesday's Life Group is facilitated by Pete and Sarah Biggs. During this past year they've had a change of members but still average 5 people per meeting. They've enjoyed the Preparing the Way course and are excited by Jesus shaped People. The whole programme is inspirational, challenging and worshipful so far, especially exploring the priorities that Jesus lived by. They're looking forward to everything that Jesus Shaped People will teach us in the coming year.

Ann Lapworth, with support from Liz Corbett, facilitates a Wednesday morning group, which consists of ladies only, as this is the natural way in which this group has evolved over time. Liz has carried on facilitating a Thursday evening group too.

In the last year Ann and Liz's groups have enjoyed the "Bible Course" which has deepened their knowledge of the big story of God's plan for the world He's created.

Recently, they've also started the "Jesus Shaped People" programme, naturally, which is our whole-church's focus until the Autumn. So far they're finding that JSP is challenging them to live the Jesus way and to share their faith with others. Their meetings have been stimulating and we have benefited from sharing our lives and praying together.

Additionally, the two groups that Gayle facilitates – on Tuesdays and Thursdays – are also currently going strong. The Tuesday Life Group sessions have grown from 2 members to 7 since Easter, with most of the new members having come into a Life Group from the most recent Alpha Course. This group are feeling enthused about their growth and are hungry to keep increasing their understanding of Jesus and how to live out the Bible's teachings in their everyday lives. Gayle's Thursday Life Group are likewise committed to meeting together, and have felt inspired by the opportunities JSP promises to bring us to develop our church's mission within Brownhills and Clayhanger.

If you would like to know more about our discipleship/Life Groups, please talk to any of us who are facilitating.

Liz Corbett, Ann Lapworth, Pete Biggs,

Sarah Biggs & Gayle Greenway

2. Worship

"Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:19-20

The worship is varied and wide ranging and it aims to praise and worship God to the utmost and to enable a diverse congregation to do this. Sung worship here at St James continues to be directed by the worship leader and additional musicians. Heart of Worship (HoW) offers an invaluable lead at a variety of services,

is relatively constant in number and continues to sing, pray and study the Bible together. Gareth has initiated an extra musician rehearsal which meets once a week. This is growing steadily in number and is brilliantly led by Gareth. These musicians are utilised in ameliorating the current musical provision by adding colour, texture and emphasis to worship times. My prayer for this coming year is that worship in its myriad forms will lead people, guided by the Holy Spirit, to a greater knowledge and love of God and to a closer walk with Him.

Pete Biggs, St James' Worship Co-ordinator

3. Social

A Community Fun Day was held on the Church Green to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This included a barbeque and circus skills demonstration. During the summer the men of the church went for a meal out at the Star In Burntwood. The ladies had an afternoon buffet in the Church Hall. A bring and buy and coffee morning were held raising money for our Lamp Food Bank and our Place of Welcome group. To begin the year a walk around Chasewater was followed by a fish and chip supper and a bowling evening. More recently we had another bowling evening, which once again was very well supported, with 65 people taking part in the fun. Many thanks to the anonymous donors who enabled us to purchase our own skittle alley.

Joy Powell

4. Pastoral Care

We have continued to meet bi-monthly on a Saturday morning, when we worship together and look at some background information on caring pastorally i.e. Dementia, deliverance,

ageing etc. These mornings have continued to give us a chance to pray more intentionally for each other, often recognising that we each give a lot in terms of care to our own biological families too.

On a weekly basis we also catch up with anyone who may need a phone call/visit. Notice sheets, magazines etc are still delivered regularly to those unable to attend long-term and who do not have internet access. Home communion is offered by Gayle and other members of the Pastoral Team when necessary. The Pastoral Team WhatsApp is essential for keeping us all up to date with people's prayer and practical needs.

Joy Powell & Gayle Greenway

Our Place of Welcome

This continues to be a popular place for those who like to meet up during the week on Tuesday mornings. During the winter months it has been a warm welcoming place to meet and we have offered soup and toast (staying open later until 1pm). We have still had our special mornings offering pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and an extra morning on Boxing Day. We are now looking to the future when we are considering staying open until 1pm once a month. We will be planning a few special mornings as well.

Our knitting group, that happens during some of our sessions, has been busy, knitting poppies for the community display last November and raising money for charity with their Easter chicks. They also provided some knitted decorations for the Places of Welcome Christmas tree in Lichfield Cathedral.

Joy & Den Powell

5. Sunday Club & Tribe

Sunday Club (for Primary school children) and Tribe (for Secondary school young people) groups continue to meet on Sundays as one mixed 'group' since initially only James attended on a weekly basis. The number of children attending regularly is, though, slowly increasing and at the time of writing this report, the average number of attendees is now 3 or 4. At the last meeting, 11 children attended. Should this continue, there will be the need to separate the children into different groups in order to age appropriately nurture them and facilitate their fun. As well as the Sunday morning children's and young people's church, a range of other holiday activities have been offered over the year April to April which have been well attended drawing in many non-churched children and their parents/family. These include: a Light Party, Christmas party, Pancake party, a visit from Eddie the Donkey, Bowling and food event, film and food night, games and lunch at Chase Water. Mel, Sue, Carol and Gareth Glass continue to facilitate. Two more leaders are being sought to lead the children and young people on the fifth Sunday of a month since the WOW Service was discontinued and 'moved' to the first Sunday of a month within the All Age Service. The Jesus Shaped People resources are being used in line with the adult resources used in Church.

We continue to take the care of each child and young person very seriously and endeavour to develop good practise in our ministry with young people and children. All our volunteer workers have enhanced DBS certificates.

Carol Glass and Mel Pearce

6. Puppets' Ministry

The Puppet Group, 'All 4 Jesus Puppets', continues to meet on Wednesdays in the Church hall. Until March of this year, the team consisted of Bella, Lily, Carol and Gareth. However, we were very sad to lose Bella whose studies have now prevented her from continuing with the Ministry. Bella has been an exceptional Puppeteer for many years and will be dearly missed. Our profound gratitude goes to her for all her hard work and input. At the end of April, we were excited to welcome a new member to the team – Daisy. Daisy is Lily's friend. We hope that Daisy will continue to enjoy being part of the puppet ministry team and decide to continue. In the last 6 months, 'All 4 Jesus Puppets' has participated in the Christmas Eve Service and in some the All Age Services. The team has expanded their ministry this year by incorporating more choreography and 'scenery'. We continue to pray that the LORD's name will be glorified through this ministry.

Carol Glass

7. The Lamp Foodbank

The Food Bank is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 11am until 1pm in a well-equipped room in the Brownhills Community Centre. The Food Bank also has the use of a warehouse facility adjacent to the main building.

The Food Bank has an excellent team of volunteers, managed very effectively by Melissa Pearce. Mel also undertakes the paperwork.

The Lamp Food Bank is part of the Black Country Food Bank. Across the eight Food Banks in Walsall there was an increase of 51% in the

number of people supported in 2022 over the number for 2021. That increase we have seen at the Lamp. Some of the conversations we have had with claimants have been quite distressing.

The Walsall BCFB Coordinator for Walsall is Allan Boot. He provides advice and support. He also transfers stock from the warehouse to our outlet. The number of families in need of support will almost certainly increase in the short to medium term. It follows that the Food Bank will need an increase in donations of stock and/or cash.

There is a donation point in the Fellowship Room/Entrance area of the church building. There is a list of the items that we need on the welcome table every Sunday. That list also notes the items that we can't hand out. Mel Pearce and I are available to answer any questions you have about our church's Foodbank ministry.

Roger Corbett

8. Charities & Missions that St James' supports

Following last year's APCM, the PCC decided that this area needed to be reviewed and updated. Gayle had put forward the idea of forming charity partnerships, so that over time we could get more involved and aware of the work of the charities and their potential interaction with God's vision for us at St James' and for Brownhills and Clayhanger.

With this in mind Gayle suggested that we reduce the recipients in order to make a more significant donation and also to concentrate on three areas: local, national and international.

There were a number of discussions around this and which charities to partner with, and the decision was finally made for the following three charities to receive our financial donations: -

Local – Love Black Country and Love Walsall

National – Christians Against Poverty

International – Salvation Army

These 3 charities were to receive £1200.00 each.

During the past year, Christians Against Poverty and Love Black Country have visited St James' to talk to the congregation about the work they do. These talks were very insightful and well received and St James continues to work and support these 2 charities.

Unfortunately, the giving for The Salvation Army was never actioned, as their organization's international contacts proved to be very difficult to get any response from. Therefore, a decision was made for this money to be sent to the Disasters Emergency Committee following the earthquake disaster in Turkey and Syria.

The next steps now for our charity partnerships are for us to establish an International Charity Partnership, review the two-way benefits of our local and national ones, and see how we can build on these partnerships in respect of our practical involvement with them.

Ann Wilkins

Deanery Synod Report

The Synod has met four times since the last APCM. The first meeting was held here at St James last June. The main topic was a presentation by Revd Richard Westwood about "Hands at Work in Africa and Link for Life."

The second meeting was in September at St Chad's Church in Lichfield. The main topic was a presentation by Kathy Lewis the Volunteer Co-ordinator with Burntwood Be a Friend. The third meeting was at Christ Church Gentleshaw. The presentation was by Revd Dr Abbie Welch, then the Assistant Rural Dean. Revd Welch presented an update on the Shaping for Mission programme. The fourth meeting was a zoom meeting. The meeting was primarily an interview with Bishop Michael.

Anita Brookes the Deanery Synod Secretary has produced some excellent notes on these meetings. The notes contain quite detailed notes on Shaping For Mission and I've made these available.

This project will need to be closely monitored as it has the potential to have a major impact on the work in our parish. I was unable to attend the meeting in March on Young People and Schools but know that our children's and young people's leaders went. I aim to attend the meeting on 24 May on Care for Creation. The next meeting of the Deanery Synod is scheduled for 15 June 2023 here at St James.

Roger Corbett

Treasurer's Report

We have managed to keep our finances stable this year despite rising prices. This is as usual due to the generosity of our congregation. Standing Orders and Church Hall income have risen during the year. We have paid out for a major roof repair to the Church and had the bathroom at 50 Lichfield Road totally refurbished. Without these major works we would have made a

small profit. We are beginning to benefit from the general increase in interest rates.

We changed our charities, who we financially support during the year, to one local (Love Black Country) one national (CAP) and one international (Salvation Army). We gave £1,200 to each of the first two. It proved difficult to do this for the Salvation Army and the money was sent to the DEC earthquake appeal instead.

Reflecting on the costs of running St James' building, the rise in fuel prices particularly is very worrying. Since January this year we have paid out over £4,000 in gas alone. This is not sustainable in the long term and unless things change dramatically, by next winter we will have difficult decisions to make.

Joy Powell, Treasurer to St James' PCC

Electoral Roll Officer's Report

During this revision, we have had 7 additions and 3 deletions. This means that the total on the Electoral Roll for 2023 will rise to 90.

66% of those on the Electoral Roll live inside the Parish and 34% live outside the Parish.

Sarah Biggs, St James' Electoral Role Officer

Safeguarding Report

There have been no reportable issues in the past 12 months. Gayle provides very discreet advice/guidance/support to members of the church family who are in need of such

advice/guidance/support. Gayle also ensures that she does not put herself at risk.

I am very grateful for the work being undertaken by Carol Glass and Gayle in ensuring that all the relevant members of the church family and those connected with the church family through Open the Book and the Food Bank ministry have up-to-date safeguarding training and where necessary have an up-to-date DBS certificate.

Roger Corbett

Community & Children's Worker's Report

Wow! what a year this has been. God has done amazing work! I feel very blessed, St James' Church has such a close connection with Brownhills communities and our local schools. Our relationships have broadened and strengthened over the year and God is central to all of this. I feel honoured to be part of his plan.

Schools: As a Church we are extremely blessed to have such a good working relationship with all our local schools. Due to the demands of schools requiring my services for craft clubs I have had to limit myself to craft clubs on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunchtimes and alternate schools per term in order to accommodate all five schools. In craft club we do an action song and a craft activity and if time allows a different game. Every child gets to hear different bible stories. Brownhills West are still operating their breakfast club and we provide 300 Crumpets and dairy free spread every week during term time. I feel passionately that no child goes hungry and feel that this is an essential

requirement. I am still a Governor for the school and I have participated in their transition from state to Academy status.

Open the Book: St James' are invited into six local schools for 'Open the Book'. The aim is to equip people to share Bible stories with children in an accessible and enjoyable way, for those of all faiths and none. To tell Bible stories in ways that enable children to engage imaginatively with the text. We have an awesome team and I do not know who gets more out of it!

Glimmer of Hope: This year we managed to put together 40 boxes for 56 adults and 85 children. Due to the pressures of The Lamp Food Bank. We felt it was important to concentrate on our voucher holders due to the cost implications. The whole idea of Glimmer of Hope is to shine a light for those with very limited means. By providing new toys and festive goodies we hope to lessen the financial burden on families and ensure that children have at least something to open on Christmas morning. = John 8-12. I am the light of the World whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.

Three of our local schools contacted me with the news that some children would not be having Christmas presents. As a result, I made an appeal to our community, and several responded by donating their government cost of living payments. This enabled us to purchase over 20 toys, each one being on each child's Christmas list.

Ninja Warrior: We gave our youth the choice of where they would like to hold their Christmas party. They decided upon going to Ninja Warrior Adventure Park, Walsall. Ten young people attended and they had a great time to build friendship, team building and unity.

Limitless Festival: We took eight young people to experience Limitless for the day at Stafford. Through the day we did sports activities, seminars, workshops and worshipped our amazing God. It was a day of experiencing community, connection and change. I am excited to take more of our young people in August of this year for a full five days. I am praying that our young people's faith will grow and strengthen. We have held a skittles night to try and fund raise to assist in the cost involved in this venture.

Holiday club: This was held during the summer holidays over three days. The theme was God's creation, this was for primary school aged children. Over the three days we did lots of crafts played different fun games, a puppet workshop and plenty of singing and action dances. Not forgetting our mascot 'Rory' (Children are a gift from the Lord, they are a reward from him. Psalm 127-3).

October's Light Party: We had 38 children attend our Neon light party. We had such a great time with face painting, dance party and lots of fun games and crafts. This was a time to shine Jesus's light into darkness and to speak life into the young people lives.

Experience Easter: We had an amazing opportunity to explain the Easter Story to a hundred children from local primary schools. We had seven different stations, 1. Palm Sunday, children learnt about Jesus entering Jerusalem on a Donkey, This enabled children to discuss what they have to be thankful for and what brings them joy. 2. Gethsemane. When Jesus went into the garden to pray and ask questions to God. The children had the opportunity to write down a question that they would like to ask God. 3. The Last Supper and friendship. The children could make a model of their best friend out of a pipe cleaner and they thanked God for their special friends. 4. The Trial. Children to think about unfair things and write them onto a paper chain for God to break the chain. 5. The Cross. Children to write down about what they are sorry for and hang it on the cross. 6. Forgiveness. Children to think about when bad things happen and people who have hurt them, they gave that heavy burden by way of a stone and dropping it into water, thereby releasing that burden and giving it to God. 7. Resurrection. For children to think about their hopes and dreams.

= John 3-16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

A favourite saying of mine is that helping one person will not change the whole world, but it will change the world for that person, and so through sharing Jesus' love and message with one child at a time, we're giving them the chance to experience His great love for them.

Mel Pearce

Churchwardens' Report

In addition to the usual business items the members of the church council (PCC) have participated in agenda items aimed at increasing the understanding of each PCC member of each other, their beliefs, their understanding, and the work they undertake in the fellowship and in team building.

On 24 September, the PCC held an away day at Cloverly Hall at Whitchurch. This excellent day out provided the members of the PCC with training to engage in sharing God's word all day every day to everyone with whom they have contact.

At the meeting on 20 March 2023 the main item was a presentation by Brendan Bassett from the Jesus Shaped People organisation. This provided the members of the PCC with an introduction to Jesus Shaped People which is the basis for our morning services over the next few months.

Moreover, we've been greatly encouraged by the 29th May Joint Service for the churches in Brownhills, that was hosted by Calvary Chapel, and the one on 25 September that was hosted by the Methodist Church. We now look forward to the next one, to be hosted by St James on Pentecost Sunday evening (28th May).

Reflecting on the church building's fabric, the main task undertaken during the past year was having many of the tiles replaced on the roof of the Church. Additionally, some very elegant extended banners have been affixed on the back wall of the main area of the church's gathering space.

50 LICHFIELD ROAD: The tenant is up to date with his rent payments. The house is over one hundred years old. The tenant does keep it in

good condition. The updating of the bathroom which was approved over a year ago has now been completed. The front door has been replaced. Some work has been undertaken to manage the small amount of damp which has appeared.

I anticipate the Paul Carr (the managing agents) will undertake a general review of the overall condition of the house in the next few months. There are likely to be some changes in the law in the next year or so which will put more obligations on landlords.

25 SNOWDROP CLOSE: This house is jointly owned with the Diocese. The house is managed by agents appointed by the Diocese. The agents charge 5% and the Diocese charges what is called a “handling charge.”

The tenants pay a monthly rent of £820. The tenants are up to date with their payments. The Diocese accounts to the PCC quarterly.

THE REPAIRS TO THE CHURCH ROOF: Two quotes were obtained by Simon Smith the architect who deals with QI matters for the replacement of the broken tiles. At its meeting in November 2021 the PCC agreed to proceed with the lower quote. The consent of the DAC and/or the Archdeacon is needed. A request was made of the architect for copies of the quotes. These would be needed by the DAC and/or the Archdeacon. The request was made on 25 November 2021. The copies were received at the end of January 2022. Mr Smith had been off work with COVID. The quotes are dated at the end of September 2021. It was therefore necessary to check that the quotes were still valid. The company which provided the higher quote was still prepared to proceed on its basis. The other company was not prepared to proceed based on its quote. There had been a substantial

increase in the cost of materials. It was agreed that the higher quote was not affordable. By email dated 23 February 2022 Mr Smith was asked for his advice. He was asked if there are any alternatives the Church could consider. No reply has been received. The position will be reviewed at the next PCC meeting.

THE REMOVAL OF THE DEFECTIVE LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR: The intended contractor has not been trading because of the restrictions imposed because of the pandemic. It isn't clear if the company has completely ceased trading.

THE CREMATED REMAINS AREA: The present area is now for practical purposes full. Investigations are underway to find a suitable area for a fresh Cremated Remains Area.

THE BARNETTS LANE CEMETRY: The volunteers continue to keep the cemetery neat and tidy and to lock and open the gates. The volunteers have obtained some brown bins from Walsall MBC. These were obtained at no cost to the Church. They are stored apart from the main bin. The volunteers have arranged for these brown bins to be emptied at no cost to the Church. On Mothering Sunday, the large bin was full. Three of the brown bins had been moved onto the area where the large bin stands. These bins were full. On top of these brown bins were a number of sacks containing items cleared from the graves. It was obvious from the nature of the bags used that they had been filled by the volunteers. These bags and the items in the brown bins have been removed at no cost to the church. The pathway from the gates to the top of the cemetery has some potholes which are

increasing in size and in number. The risk of damage to vehicles and/or injury to pedestrians is quite high. Consideration will need to be given on how the risks can be reduced.

A real highlight for both of us as wardens, amidst the above practicalities, has been the real signs of growth and faith. We both want to say, as we know Gayle does, a huge thank you to the anonymous donors who gave so generously for us to be able to purchase our own Baptism Pool for Immersion Baptisms. The immersions we've witnessed over the past year have brought us joy. Hearing their testimonies, about how they have grown in faith on the Alpha course, it has been just wonderful. I (Margaret) have gained a lot of joy this year from sorting out flower arrangements for services, too, all for the glory of Jesus, and just want to add that we've both felt blessed to be able to serve as wardens.

Roger Corbett & Margaret Powell

Cards

I (Angela) am the Birthdays Administrator and to date, 66 birthdays have been marked on our church family calendar. It's a tremendous privilege to mark people's special days by sending them a card to mark the occasion and to bless them in that way. Helping them realise that they have not been forgotten in the hustle and bustle of life, a special ministry that is rewarded when they open the card and find someone has taken the trouble to appreciate their day. If anyone in church has a birthday which is

not marked on our calendar and they want to be remembered, please let me know. Thanks very much.

Margaret adds: 'In terms of our memorial services, I continue to send our memorial card invitations, personally inviting those who have lost their loved ones to come and be ministered to at these services, which happen 4 times a year. In addition, we send cards out for couples who have got married on their first anniversary, letting them know they are in our thoughts and prayers.

Angela Cooper and Margaret Powell

Vicar's Report

Dear church family,

Reflecting over this past year, I'm so thankful to God for how although Covid is still around, we've been so much freer to do things involving meeting together than during the year 2021-2022. This greater freedom allowed us to have our Prayer Room in place in church for the fortnight leading up to Pentecost Sunday, not long after our last APCM. Our theme for the room was 'Restoration'. Having that Prayer Room not only served local children and young people – it gave some of our members, of all ages, the chance to experiment with new ways of praying, and to talk to God about topics they hadn't explored in prayer very much before.

Something I continue to deeply value about St James' church family is our openness to try out new things and to adapt, to be open to God's vision. As we now travel further into our *Jesus Shaped People Programme*, it's going to be even more vital that we stay with this outlook of being willing to experiment, and that

we spur one another on, so that all of our members can catch the fire! The fire I'm referring to is that of the Holy Spirit, who is ready to fill us all as we ask Him and keep on asking Him.

Over the past year it's been God's Holy Spirit who's been working on hearts and minds. These are some of the ways that I've been especially noticing His work: -

On Sundays in our ***gathered worship***: I'm noticing that people are feeling freer and more relaxed in the worship, as well as more passionate – recognising that it's all for God's glory and yet He delights in seeing us enjoy worshipping and connecting deeply with His Presence in the worship. More of us are realising the joy there is in Jesus telling us that His burden is light and that it's Jesus' desire to uplift us as we worship. This is something that I've chatted with members of Heart of Worship and with some of our musicians about on mid-week occasions. I've been encouraging those leading us in sung worship to recognise that their leadership can have such a positive influence on our gathered worship. I've encouraged them to realise that their joy, their pain, their passion – all of their emotions as they're real in the worship – all of these things point to how our God is real and is genuinely interested in our lives.

As I think about ***discipleship*** over the past year, it's so encouraging that the Bible Course inspired so many of our members to more greatly commit to reading the Bible each day. Having come to understand more about how the Bible fits together, Bible reading has felt a little easier to embark on. Since I facilitate the Alpha Course twice a year (Autumn and the Spring Term), that's been a key way that some of our newer members have both come to a point of commitment to Jesus as well as a sense of, in their words, 'feeling at home' as members of St

James' church family. To summarise our discipleship as a church right now, I sense the Lord's saying that we're at a really vital point. It's the right time for us to be doing ***Jesus Shaped People (JSP)***, and I pray that we'll all be talking about it and living it – holding it truly within the cores of our beings – whether we're in a mid-week Life Group or not. You see Jesus is inviting us all to be on this journey. Just as we see in the Gospel accounts though, He won't chase after us or seek to coerce us into being on the adventure. At St James' I pray that we'll all make that choice to be on the adventure because it's life-giving! We'll feel challenged by some of the JSP fortnightly tasks, yes, but this is exciting because challenge makes us more alive in Jesus. Let's choose to take the risks, knowing we always have God by our side, and that you can always talk things about JSP through with me or with anyone on our church council (PCC). We're in this together!

Valuing all-ages is something that's so close to mine and our church's heart. There's a great deal of love, compassion and care within our church family for one another, that week on week reveals itself through the consistently mindful outlook of our Place of Welcome Co-ordinators, our Pastoral Team and our Lamp Foodbank Team. Our children's and young people's teams, too, are relentlessly committed in their enthusiasm for local children and young people in the schools, who are at events we've put on, and who we're seeing more regularly on Sundays. Noting this care, I just want to say that God is smiling on this. He's telling us that as leaders He loves our consistent faithfulness and that He will honour that faithfulness.

Lastly, as we look beyond the 14th May's Celebration Service for all that's happened over the past year in our church's life, I'd like to ask for everyone's prayers for God's mission within Brownhills and

Clayhanger. There are many ways in which people can see our service of the local communities. Yet there's a need for them to experience us drawing alongside them *where they are*, for them to hear us listening to what they want in life – to what they'd want from Jesus – and then *for them to experience that He is real*.

Those needs relate directly to 3 callings that over the past 18 months we've been sensing that God's been giving us. These are: **1) to be a church who *share with others that God knows and sees them personally*. 2) to be a church who know that *in our strength all is impossible, but with God, all IS possible*. 3) to be *a church who point to His nature as Wonderful Counsellor*.**

What exciting callings! So please can I invite each of us to be taking some time each week to pray privately and/or with a friend from church or in our Life Groups about: continued growth in freedom in our gathered worship, our JSP programme, all ages being valued, and confidence not in what we can do but in what God can do through us.

With love and every blessing in our King of Kings, who came to serve, Jesus,

Rev'd Gayle